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ABSTRACT

Provided are guidelines for student participation in kindergarten classrooms under the aegis of the Baylor University Kindergarten Student Aide Program. The guidelines specify requirements and responsibilities of student aides; suggest environmental, instructional, and student variables for observation; and provide recommendations for student involvement in small- and large-group activities. Also provided are general hints for the student aide and guidance for aides participating in school routines such as playground activities, mealtime, and use of restrooms and drinking fountains. (RH)

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THE KINDERGARTEN STUDENT AIDE
Procedures and Practices in the Kindergarten Classroom

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Purpose

The purpose of the Student Aide Program is to provide an opportunity for the student to relate theory to practice from observation and participation in a kindergarten classroom. The student becomes acquainted with the five year old, learns school routine, develops a knowledge of materials and methods and discovers the satisfaction and difficulties of teaching young children.

Procedure

One hour a week is spent in a kindergarten classroom as a student aide. The student aide signs in for each period spent in the classroom and wears an identification badge provided for volunteer staff while in the building.

The student aide must notify the designated office when unable to attend. Make-up periods must be arranged by the student. Records are kept by the volunteer office of the school district and a progress report is made by the teacher. A copy of the report is given to the professor at the end of the semester.

A journal must be kept by the student aide; recording observation, participation in the classroom, and patterns or ideas observed.

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FOREWORD

Over 800 students have participated in the Baylor University Kindergarten Student Aide Program since its inception in 1970. The public school teachers and the student aides involved in the program credit it as an outstanding event in the professional training of the kindergarten teacher. The quality of the student aide program manifests itself very noticeably in later semesters, as the student teachers exhibit a high level of self-confidence when entering their assignments.

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What the Student Aide Can Do

The student aide can:

1. Observe the teaching procedures followed by the supervising teacher, taking note of schedule, method, management and selected materials.
2. Become familiar with available instructional materials.
3. Make an effort to become acquainted with the children, learning as many names as possible.
4. Participate in teaching activities in learning centers, with small groups of children or with an individual child.
5. Plan and provide materials and activities for small groups or an individual.
6. Assist in activities outside the classroom. Example: Breakfast, lunch or taking the children to the restroom or water fountain.

Observation

The student aide should develop observation skills and learn from them.

1. Observe the physical environment:
   Games, play equipment, instructional materials, audio visual equipment, room arrangement, furniture and bulletin board displays.
2. Observe the teaching procedures:
   Activities of group time, learning centers, stories, music, games and motor activities, presentations of mathematics, reading, language development, social studies and science; management and discipline techniques.
3. Observe the children:
   Interest, attention span, behavior, self concept, language skills, motor development, body size, and level of learning.

Participation

The student aide should get involved with the routine and the children. The following information should serve as a guide for active participation.

Small-Group Activities

1. Consult with the teacher on purpose, plans, materials, goals, location and the children involved in small groups.
2. Remember to introduce yourself to the children. (You are Miss____ or Mrs.____.)
3. Learn the names of the children.
4. Explain the activity to the children. Demonstrate if necessary.
5. Use reinforcement techniques during the activity. Remember to find the children who are giving the correct responses.
6. Guide behavior by stating the expected behavior. Be positive.
7. If the activity is not going well, be creative; change or make adjustments.
8. Follow-up activities. Check to see what the children have learned. Evaluation will help in improving your techniques. Briefly report results to the teacher.

Large-Group Activities

1. Large group activities may be reading to the group, showing a film strip, singing, finger games or rhythm with a record.
2. When directing the large group, be prepared and practice appropriate procedures.
3. When not directing the activity, join the group unless otherwise directed by the teacher.
4. Help the children who need assistance when appropriate. When a child is disruptive, remind him of the appropriate behavior. Avoid "Shhh". This may be more distracting than the child. A touch on the shoulder or knee may be an appropriate reminder.

Routine Times

Routine times in the learning environment are important opportunities for learning and must be planned. The following guidelines may be helpful for the student aide.

1. Playground -- The teacher must accompany the children on the playground at all times. Be aware of the total group and be involved with the children as they play. Consult with the teacher concerning planning an activity for the playground. Remember to observe rules and procedures for the safety of the children at all times.
2. Mealtime -- The student aide should become familiar with the cafeteria routine, locate tables used by the class, locate the entrance and exit and know the method of seating and leaving the cafeteria. Mealtime should be a pleasant time for the children, and can be with patience in the routine.
3. Rest time -- A brief quiet time is necessary for the young child. Encourage children to rest, not necessarily sleep; and when possible, assist the teacher in preparations for this time of the day. Some teachers will prefer the student aide assist in developing instructional materials at this time or become familiar with files, materials, and visit other classrooms.
4. Restroom and Drinking Fountain -- The student aide accompanies the boys and girls to the restroom. Caution should be observed to avoid accidents. Children should be encouraged to use the restroom and return to the room without playing or loitering.

   When using the drinking fountain, the aide should remind the children of the appropriate behavior and of the dangers of pushing or cutting in front of others.
5. General Information -- The children ride buses and arrive at various times at the beginning of the morning. Most classes observe a free time or self-selected activity schedule until all the buses arrive. Most classes have large-group or circle time following free time in the morning. Classes usually have a center time during which children work in small groups, some independently and some with teacher direction. Children rotate from center to center depending on the objective and selected method of the teacher. Many children are scheduled to leave the room at various times of the day for assistance by specialist. During the week, special classes and activities for the large group are scheduled outside of the classroom.

   It is not the responsibility of the student aide to allow the child to leave the room alone with anyone or to punish the children in any way.

Hints for the Aide

The following hints may provide optimum learning in the student aide experience.

1. Wear confortable clothing, especially shoes.
2. Arrive on time.
3. Learn the classroom schedule and routine and follow record keeping procedures.
4. Check with the teacher for assignments and give attention to schedules or directions.
5. Ask for advice in using unfamiliar teaching devices.
6. Sit down to work with the children when it is appropriate.
7. Sit with the children during group time when not directly involved in an activity.
8. Ask the teacher when in doubt about procedure.
9. Be aware of the teacher's direction to the children.
10. Don't engage the children in conversation when the teacher has asked for the attention of the children.
11. Remind the children of the rules when walking down the hall.
12. Refer the child to the teacher when asking permission, particularly if the procedure is uncertain. Avoid contradiction of the teacher's decision.
13. Keep the safety of the children in mind.
14. Consider the learning experience of the children.
15. Be a part of every activity possible. Participate in a variety of experiences in the Kindergarten Classroom. That is how you learn!

Conclusion

Participating directly is a valuable experience in preparing to become a teacher. Through participation, you will see children living and learning together. You will experience positive and negative learning and will observe teachers; try your skills and techniques and begin to develop your own teaching style.

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